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## THE YONKERS PLAN OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>

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The Yonkers plan of community organization, consisting of a central coördinating council and ten affiliated neighborhood councils, grew accumulatively into its present status through a series of coöperative studies made by various groups, the results of which successively pointed to this much needed but unanticipated consummation.

Briefly told, two groups worked simultaneously but independently; one made a sociological survey of Yonkers which culminated in the organization of neighborhood councils, the other examined the coördinating council plan in relation to the prevention of delinquency. These two groups met at the end of a year's respective work and pooled the fruits of their studies. A committee from both groups was selected, through the efforts of which the Yonkers

<sup>1</sup> This is an account of a coöperative effort in school-community integration. The participants in the survey and neighborhood council organization included elementary principals: Elijah Parmerter, Georgia King Pearson, Ruth Freal, Agnita C. Wallace, Julia Gregory, Florence Hopkins, Lillian F. Morrow, Mamie V. Herald, Grace Narr, Charlotte Miller, Dorothy Coufos, Burr D. Vail, Katherine Short; directors: Betty B. Frye, J. Winthrop Andrews, Anne M. Vanston, Melvin H. Kempton; specials and teachers: Olga Schlobohm, Elizabeth Heil, Janet Underhill, Mary Palya, Madelene Urich, Jessie Malcolm, Sue J. Olds, and many others. The assistant superintendent of elementary schools was chairman.

Coördinating Council was formally organized in November 1936.

Neighborhood councils, however, had been organized by members of the survey group during the process of the survey, the previous school year, six months before the Yonkers Coördinating Council was launched. These functioning units sent representatives to the central Coördinating Council, as did other organizations, agencies, and institutions. Under stimulation of the survey group, the organization of neighborhood councils continued; each linked itself with the Yonkers Coördinating Council and the plan began to shape itself.

At this writing there are ten neighborhood councils, all with representatives in the Coördinating Council, and several other groups in more or less embryonic stages of development. The Yonkers plan is therefore still in evolution. Future accretion depends on felt needs.

The story of how the pattern of the plan emerged piecemeal from the studies mentioned and how each unit of organization fell into place can best be told in sections covering the following sequence: (1) the sociological research upon which the plan is founded; (2) neighborhood councils and their programs; (3) junior councils; (4) the Yonkers Coördinating Council, its organization and program; (5) coördination of education and the community.

#### THE SOCIOLOGICAL SURVEY IN YONKERS

The Yonkers plan has a research basis, but no member of the survey group visualized the plan as such; nor had any group a definite conception of community organization when it began its work.

A number of Yonkers school directors, principals, and teachers, with the assistant superintendent of elementary schools as chairman, decided in September 1935 to study school neighborhoods to ascertain the influences playing on school children. Thereafter, expert direction on essential techniques was secured from a nearby college, the city was divided into ecological areas, and a survey made on the

basis of eight sociological factors: population, composition, stability, housing, health, economic status, dependency, and delinquency. There followed the making of a base map of every district. Each school participated in this second project. Thus assets and liabilities conditioning wholesome neighborhood life were listed.

No one anticipated even remotely where these approaches to unfamiliar fields would lead. Expectation was that these studies would direct necessary curriculum changes and thus improve integration of school and neighborhood life.

The revelations were so overwhelming, however, that curriculum revision seemed futile unless an attempt was first made to create controls over the environmental factors that continually nullified the objectives of the schools. Plainly, the conditions uncovered in each area called for wide representative neighborhood responsibility. To meet this need the neighborhood council was born. The colossal tasks which confronted these neighborhood groups can only be comprehended by an understanding of the social fabric of Yonkers and the variety of problems involved.

*Population, housing, and health.* Yonkers parallels many old residential towns, established by north European stock, suddenly transformed through intensive industrialization into a city that has a predominantly foreign population of vastly different traditions, settling by national groups near hastily established factories. One third of Yonker's population of 135,000 is foreign born; 66 per cent is foreign born and of foreign parentage. There are 7 per cent Italians; 4 per cent each of Polish and Irish; 3 per cent each of Scotch, German, and Czechs; 1 per cent each of English, Russian, and Hungarians; 3 per cent Negroes. There is a total of thirty-three nationalities.

As wave after wave of immigration inundated the social milieu, sections were blighted; factories scarred the river front; single houses were crowded with large families; tenements were erected with meager sanitary facilities, congesting the town center and

creating acute housing problems. Yonkers now has more cheap housing than it can utilize; 25 per cent of this type is vacant. One third of the population of Yonkers lives in 4 per cent of the city's area, in poor housing. Here 60 per cent of the tubercular deaths occurred in the last decade.

Yonkers spreads over twenty-four square miles and has many fine residential areas on the periphery of the city, each segregated by hills, terraces, and roads which are "the longest way around." Taxes are paid in Yonkers, while economic and social connections are made with adjacent towns and New York City. The professional and semiprofessional groups of these sections, plus a large white-collar group, make up an immense commuting population. The proximity to New York with its variety of employment, goods, and amusements creates a detached attitude in Yonkers citizens that retards the development of community-mindedness.

*Unemployment and dependency.* Of 57,943 gainfully employed persons in Yonkers, 23,270 are in manufacturing and mechanical industries. Even before the depression, the factories were no longer able to employ the large foreign contingent brought here to supply cheap labor. "The largest hat factory in the world" went into bankruptcy; "the largest carpet factory in the world" razed the greater part of its plant; the two huge sugar refineries will open no more; the extensive elevator works and smaller shops operate frequently on part time. When the Yonkers Survey was made, there were about 3,800 families under WPA and about 104 unemployable families on city relief. Calculations indicated that Yonkers had 5,000 unemployed youth of which 3,000 were registered in the National Reemployment Service, while 400 were under NYA.

Yonkers has been left with a devastating relief problem and a large restless group, which, through no fault of its own, suffers physical and mental distress because of continuous unemployment.

*Education, recreation, and delinquency.* During the period of active immigration, Yonkers built one large elementary school each



year to furnish the "melting pot." Later extensive development of high-school units and the subsequent depression brought enforced neglect of elementary-school buildings, the oldest of which are in underprivileged areas, tragically inadequate to serve their neighborhood. Public outdoor recreational space, although totaling a fair acreage, is poorly distributed in Yonkers and seldom planned to serve all age levels. Meeting places for Scout troops and other character-building activities are at a premium. The delinquency record for Yonkers is average with its peak (80 per cent of cases) in the congested areas lacking recreation. These conditions represent a serious community problem.

#### EFFECT OF SURVEY

The survey and base maps focused the attention of school groups on the problems of each ecological area. Congested localities were completely "blue" (lowest classification) in all the survey factors. The correlation between delinquency, poor housing, and low economic status, once an interesting theory, became a startling fact when applied to "my" school district! Better areas, too, had some surprisingly low ranks. This "homemade" survey brought strong reactions to the surveyors who, by virtue of their professional positions, had to stay on the spot. Such a set-up favors action. Even before the survey was finished three neighborhood councils were operating. The school acknowledged its integrant relationship to the community. It recognized its need for two-way participation in school and community affairs.

The year after the survey (1936-1937) the school group, augmented to seventy members, resumed the work of community analysis under collegiate guidance, improved its techniques, stimulated further neighborhood organization, extended the school community center programs, encouraged the formation of junior councils, and engaged in curriculum experimentation, all of which activities will be briefly reported in this issue.

*The Parent-Teacher Association's Part.* To the P.T.A. groups must be credited the strong initial impetus toward community integration. Their immediate acceptance of the sociological survey, their awareness of community problems, their vigorous attack on neighborhood conditions vitalized the whole movement and stirred other groups to action. Later in this article it will be seen that the Council of Parents and Teachers played an important part in initiating the organization of the Yonkers Coördinating Council. In underprivileged areas with new P.T.A. organizations, or none, neighborhood councils sprang up immediately after, and even during, the survey. Gradually the functions of the P.T.A. and neighborhood council became apparent and the need for both was increasingly felt. The demands of the Adult Education Department and the Recreation Commission for a broad representative neighborhood decision on school community center programs clarified the matter along this line. Usually, P.T.A. groups have too limited a membership to perform this function alone.

The most important function of the P.T.A. is to bring the school and home together through a common understanding of child growth in and out of school; equally important is the interpretation and evaluation of the education offerings in the local schools. To further these grand aims, the P.T.A.'s provide for their organizations' monthly programs, planned strategically and scientifically for set purposes. The neighborhood council has no set programs. It meets to consider its problems in terms of committee reports.

The membership of these two organizations differ. The P.T.A. consists of as many parents of the school children as will join. Other persons may join but they rarely do. P.T.A.'s in schools of diverse racial or national groups are seldom successful in getting even two differing groups into the organization. The neighborhood council membership is made up of the *leaders* of various organizations, agencies, and nationalities. Groups that are not articulate find a channel of expression through their leaders in this way.

Ideally, the neighborhood council is a coördinating body operating only until such time as existing agencies may be established or strengthened to take over the operation of projects. A function of the neighborhood council is to recommend the organization of a P.T.A. or other needed organizations where none exist, thus providing operating agencies.

*Neighborhood councils.* The first neighborhood councils, as has been said, were formed in underprivileged areas and it can be well understood that in these cases the principals, beset by difficulties of school-building limitations in addition to numerous social problems, directly initiated the movement. In later instances, however, organization was motivated by forces outside of the school. In one case, a progressive group, realizing the problems in its neighborhood, went to the school head and suggested a council; in another, the local clergy and an influential parent offered to coöperate with a principal in forming a council; in several neighborhoods the P.T.A. leaders initiated the movement; and in another, although the principal set up the techniques of organization, there was neighborhood readiness, for some men in this underprivileged area exclaimed at the first meeting, "We were wondering why we didn't have a neighborhood council like the other schools!"

In residential districts, neighborhood councils were more slowly formed. These groups seem less aware of their own social problems, or perhaps, because of the general comfort of their lives, they unconsciously postpone facing certain issues. Then, too, they are so far removed from the undesirable conditions of the underprivileged areas that they feel no keen responsibility for problems of city-wide proportions. These outlying residential sections, however, differ greatly in community-mindedness. The successful neighborhood councils operating in some of the localities show by the scope of their programs the high quality of awareness evidenced.

*Junior councils.* The need for prepared community leadership is clearly evident to all who are participating in the present move-

ment. For this reason and because the environment set up for the child is their present concern, junior councils are being formed in the schools. At this time, there are sixteen junior councils in our twenty-six elementary schools. Some are briefly described in another section of this issue; all are still in an experimental stage.

#### EVALUATION

Each of the operating neighborhood councils, with details of its organization, program, and evaluation, is sketched in the following article. All of these units are young, ranging from several months to a little over a year. Each has its own unique neighborhood situation to meet, its own level of leadership; yet all are united on the one issue that brought them into being: the need for safeguarding children through an improved environment.

It may seem to the critic that these councils are engaged on surface problems and that their objective achievements are not deeply rooted. Yet the gain is immense if computed in terms of social growth: the greater spread of responsibility for child welfare; the amount of new leadership uncovered; the sum total of participation by new sections of population heretofore unrecognized; the awakened interest in community problems; the development of a spirit of neighborliness through group work and play; the increase of social understanding on the part of school persons who have entered into this community work; the coördination of professional and lay resources; the wider vision through contacts in coöperation with the Yonkers Coördinating Council.

From all these efforts will emerge stronger social techniques, higher standards of community life, an environment better suited to the needs of wholesome child life.

## THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS OF YONKERS

RUNYON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 1

Dorothy Coufos, *Principal*

The Runyon Heights Neighborhood Council was initiated in May 1936 at Public School 1 because of the meager environmental resources and the inadequacy of the school building. Situated three miles from the Yonkers business section with poor trolley service and the most unstable population in the city, this area consists of colored families of fair economic status, Pullman porters, professional and semiprofessional groups, and also an underprivileged Italian group.

The school enrollment shows 35 per cent whites, 65 per cent colored; 29 per cent of pupils are colored welfare wards boarding out. There is much vacant land; housing is fair in the colored sections, poor elsewhere. There are no libraries, movies, or playgrounds. Civic and political clubs, mostly colored, and one church for each race are all active. Colored leadership is easier to find than white. There is no delinquency problem.

The organization of the council is made up of representatives of local organizations; namely, Runyon Heights Civic Improvement Association, Women's Club, Metropolitan A.M.E. Zion Church, and Public School 1 Parent Teacher Association. Officers were elected and committees on health, recreation, adult education, and publicity were appointed.

During the first year the Council sponsored an operetta, a boy's choral club, a WPA Symphony Orchestra concert, and organized Boy and Girl Scout troupes. This year, through the efforts of the Council, the ragweed in the neighborhood was destroyed. The greatest achievement in the Council's opinion is the securing of the addition and renovation of the school building, a new kindergarten, a portable stage for the gymnasium-auditorium, a nurse's room, and a new office for the principal.

The adult homemaking class has been resumed. The recreation committee has secured two playleaders for afterschool recreation. A large vacant lot with a tax lien has been selected by the Council for a needed playground.

Our Council president conferred with the city planning director and the Council will continue to work until the playground is secured.

The Council has improved community life by facing and working on community problems. This coöperative work for the welfare of the whole is minimizing racial prejudices.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 2

Mamie V. Herald, *Principal*

In a neighborhood predominantly Italian, including Negroes and a small English-speaking group, in one of the most congested, underprivileged sections was found the greatest dependency, the poorest housing, the lowest health record, and the highest delinquency rate in the city.

Three large elementary schools and a large junior high school serve this area, none of which have found it possible to maintain a P. T. A. There are no playgrounds conveniently available.

The occasion which crystallized the felt need for a neighborhood council was school-centered. Public School 2 has suffered a decreased enrollment. Fear of having the vacant rooms of their large modern school building preëmpted by the crowded trade school stirred some of the parents in the neighborhood. The press publicity given to neighborhood councils in other districts caught their attention and several progressive women in the district put the query to the vice-principal, "Why can't we have a neighborhood council?" On November 30, 1936, thirty interested persons met. They knew what they wanted. And forthwith the officers of the Waverly Neighborhood Council were elected; for chairman, a young Italian doctor; for vice-chairman, a housewife, deeply in-



terested in the civic matters of the ward; for secretary, a housewife experienced in church affairs and later active in Girl Scout work; the treasurer, a young colored college graduate, intent on furthering the welfare of his race; the executive, the vice-principal, who has since become the principal. The local priest became the adviser of the Council.

Before the Council was organized there were no successful contacts with the parents. The Council made its first contacts through the sending out of interests' questionnaires written in both English and Italian. There were 105 returns: 33 persons wished to study dressmaking; 15 cooking; 15 knitting; 23 beauty culture; 25 English; 16 bridge; 12 homemaking; 12 dancing; 14 home nursing; with other interests scattered.

In the first year, a Girl Scout troop was formed; a traffic guard was secured from the NYA; a card party and dance was held; dishes were purchased for the school for recreational use; the Red Cross sponsored and financed a course in home nursing for our community; letters and telegrams were sent to the Legislature to support State aid for kindergartens, the Movie Bill, and other bills and projects that affected our community life; letters were sent to the mayor regarding the library closing and delegates and display work were sent to the Convention of Neighborhood Councils. This fall we secured a traffic officer and the Red Cross is again financing the course in home nursing.

Plans for the future include: organization of Cub Packs; securing a playground recreation supervisor after school hours; searching vacant grounds for play space; stopping the sale of salacious literature; working for better housing; establishing a community center in the school. A boy's clubhouse is the dream of the Italian priest. The Council hopes to diminish delinquency by substituting wholesome recreation. At present there are 30 members. A membership drive is to be launched.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL OF PUBLIC SCHOOL 5

Ruth Freal, *Principal*

The Senior Council of Public School 5 was organized on January 27, 1936. The membership included representatives from the ten important civic and social clubs in the community, interested parents, and professional groups.

The object of the organization was to coördinate the services of the community and school for the welfare of the girls and boys.

In order to function, officers were elected which included chairman, co-chairman, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, and financial secretary. Vital community problems were discussed and the following committees were appointed: recreational sites committee, school-building committee, adult recreation, and neighborhood safety improvement.

The Council of Public School 5 held meetings once a month during the school year and the achievements were: (1) compilation of a survey showing location of tax lien property appropriate for recreational sites; (2) securing of patrols for coasting and skating areas; (3) providing leaders for school Scout troops, Cub and Brownie Packs; (4) conducting adult play nights; (5) forming of adult-education classes and forums; (6) purchasing of play material for school recreation room from proceeds of community bridge party; (7) showing of motion pictures by community club.

This Council has proved to be a very active coördinating force in the community and has made extensive plans for the coming year.

## NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 6

Eljah Parmerter, *Principal*

An old residential section, now a heterogeneous locality with slum areas due to business encroachment; a mixed population of 70 per cent whites of fair economic status and 30 per cent of under-

privileged Negroes of good class—this is the neighborhood of Public School 6.

The school enrollment has dropped; the population is unstable and decreasing; the older of the two elementary buildings was abandoned and the children crowded into one unit, without sunlight, auditorium, playroom, library, and special class. Education comparable to that furnished in other Yonkers schools could not be provided.

With problems of delinquency, unemployment, and dependency, with poor housing, and a wretched school building, it is not surprising that the Neighborhood Council of Public School 6 was the first to be organized, May 1936.

The Council consists of eight local clergymen from both races, both white and colored parents, a local woman doctor, a real-estate dealer, a lawyer, an engineer, an insurance broker, an NYA director, some business men, two aldermen, several teachers, and the principal.

The Council has made solid achievements. The present building is completely and attractively renovated, the older building razed, and a modern unit is to be erected on that site. Use of the armory parade ground for recreation during the school day was secured, and one objective of the Council is to secure this area with a recreation leader after school hours. On February 9 the colored civic-forum group opened a community gameroom in the neighborhood to operate daily for adults and children. A petition bearing 400 names requested city officials to purchase the Pitkin property for a neighborhood park. A sponsoring committee from the Council has developed a Boy Scout troop of 22 boys under the leadership of a parent. A Clean-Up Week with Council members acting as judges, and awards given, was carried out.

The local colored minister who made a Negro housing survey of this locality serves on the Housing Committee of the Yonkers Co-

ordinating Council. Through his efforts and the curriculum units on local housing initiated by the school children, the neighborhood is intensely conscious of its housing problem. The local newspaper has given much publicity and editorial space to this need.

A delegate of the Neighborhood Council reported fully and wittily at the convention of the Council on May 25, 1937. Our Neighborhood Council has joined the Coördinating Council.

The Council sponsored many neighborhood entertainments: the WPA symphony concert in the school yard; a strawberry festival for adults and children for which parents hulled eight crates of berries, and at which a choral club of colored boys sang spirituals under neighborhood leadership; a reception; a beautiful brooch and eulogies for the principal who had coöperated valiantly with the Council. Home talent contributed vocal and instrumental music and luscious refreshments. Warm fellowship and good will marked the evening. In November came a Hallowe'en party, with a dress parade of children and parents, followed by games and refreshments. A friendly neighborhood spirit has been created.

The Council still has many problems. Adult education waits on the new building; a branch library requires a home; public land on the river front for recreation is desired; the purchase of land for a park is another need; yards should be cleared of debris and soil enrichment for gardens is needed; problems of housing, recreation, and obscene literature have been referred to the Yonkers Coördinating Council.

The Council has operated through two years of building turmoil. It knows its problems. It has expanded its activities, enlarged its membership, and improved its leadership technique. There is a new spirit of hope in the neighborhood. Life is richer for both adults and children through opportunities for coöperative service. The Council has developed its own sense of stability and permanency.

NODINE HILL COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 7

Georgia King Pearson, *Principal*

Nodine Hill, one of the oldest sections of Yonkers, is now predominantly foreign. This group is about 61 per cent stationary and contains many underprivileged families. Of 262 school families questioned, 86 per cent live in cold-water flats, 14 per cent in heated apartments, and 6 per cent in private houses. Thirty-six families have no inside bathrooms and share outside toilets. Twenty-eight per cent have no books, 18 per cent read no newspapers, and 67 per cent have no social-club interest outside of school. A large percentage is, or has been, on relief due to factory conditions. There are no adequate available recreational facilities. The big boys "hang around" and there is a serious afterschool delinquency problem in the neighborhood.

The elementary school, one of the oldest and shabbiest in Yonkers, was recommended by a survey to be abandoned and the children transferred elsewhere. Sentiment and the closing of a parochial school have combined to maintain the building in active service.

In May 1936, the Public School 7 Council was formed. Some old alumni, some parents, political leaders, and representatives of the school staff constituted the Council. This group began working for needed school repairs and took a keen interest in the activities of the school-community center which the principal had attempted to maintain singlehanded for nearly two years.

A reorganization of the Council took place in November 1936. Local clergy and realtors became members and the name was changed to the Nodine Hill Council because of its wider community interests. A real community spirit was born. Council committees and their achievements follow.

1. Health and safety. This committee worked to restore free diphtheria immunization clinics to the city. School rating for immunization rose from 81 per cent to 96.8 per cent.

Under the committee's leadership the Council sought action from our State senator regarding effective legislation to deal with sex crimes. He is working to secure such legislation.

2. Recreation. This committee is seeking increased play space.

3. Sale of obscene literature. This city-wide problem has been referred to the Yonkers Coördinating Council for action.

4. Religious training. The Council went on record as advocating religious training for all children in the community.

5. School-community center. The needs for a gymnasium and repairs to the building have been presented to the Board of Education.

6. Housing. This committee has made one report as to housing conditions in the Nodine Hill section.

7. Neighborhood movies. This committee has requested reserved sections and matron's care for the children.

#### *Council Objectives 1937-1938*

To make Nodine Hill Council a clearing house for neighborhood problems; to secure adult leadership for the activities of the school-community center; to work for the renovation of Public School 7; to work for better health and safety conditions in the neighborhood and school; to work for better motion-picture programs and theater conditions for the children of the community.

The Public School 7 neighborhood has developed a splendid spirit of understanding and good will. It is learning to face its problems through the service of the Nodine Hill Council and hopes to secure better recreational, social, and moral conditions for its people.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 12

Agnita C. Wallace, *Principal*

The sociological survey shows this neighborhood in the blue (lowest) classification on every one of the eight factors used. Out of twenty-four ecological areas surveyed, this section ranked twenty-second in economic status; twenty-first in population growth; twenty-third in stability of population; twenty-third in



housing; twenty-first in dependency (one third of the families are on relief); twenty-third in delinquency; twenty-third in health, with the highest tuberculosis death rate in the city. There are twenty-three nationalities in the school.

Intermittent employment in the carpet factory is at the root of much of the poverty found here and has affected the shift and decrease of population. These people are dependent on all the social agencies, and the school must help to make needed contacts. The children were better nourished when city relief selected and provided the food.

Housing conditions are bad; the toilets in the halls are used by several families; sleeping rooms are often without airshafts. In this congested, underprivileged area there are no outdoor recreation spaces for children in the immediate locality. The older boys "hang around." Gangs congregate on corners and around the poolrooms. Naturally, delinquency looms large after school hours. With such a conglomeration of neighborhood problems, it is not surprising that the principal took the initiative in organizing the Neighborhood Council, after experimenting with the junior alumni group.

Twenty-four persons attended the first meeting on December 1, 1936, and the Neighborhood Council was organized. A neighborhood man, although inexperienced, accepted the chairmanship. The charter members included a former mayor who is interested in this section, two clergymen of the locality, the alderman, the Scout troop leader, three teachers of the school, and several fathers and mothers.

Earnest consideration was given to neighborhood problems. The cleaning of the neighborhood brook, a menace, was an important issue. A mother of seven spoke for safe recreation places; another for safe paths for bicycle riders; the children now take their chances with trucks in crowded traffic. Committees on recreation, housing, health, safety, adult education, delinquency, membership, publicity, Scouts, and social activities were appointed.

Achievements during the Council's first year include a mass meeting initiated by the chairman; endorsement of the Wagner Bill and the Federal Housing Bill; securing afterschool recreation for children; securing a speaker on safety and crime prevention; organizing adult classes in dressmaking; organizing Play Night and Bingo parties; checking the condition of the Nepperhan Creek; petitioning a city clinic for diphtheria immunization; petitioning for a full public-library schedule; petitioning for a safety light; forbidding trucks on streets where children play.

At the opening meeting for this year, the future plans of the Council included finding play spaces, finding recreational leaders, improving schoolyard, checking creek conditions, watching legislation, and expanding membership.

The greatest value of the Council is the opportunity it offers for mutual recognition and local leadership. The growth of the chairmanship has been outstanding. The Council affords opportunities for the exchange of ideas. People are beginning to feel that the Council, the school, and the community belong to them.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, SHERWOOD PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL 14

Elizabeth M. Elliot, *Principal*<sup>1</sup>

Quoting from the speech made by the Rev. Bernard Montgomery, President of the Sherwood Park Neighborhood Council, at the Neighborhood Council Convention on May 25, 1937:

For a number of years, some of us in the various organizations active for community betterment felt the need of coördinating our efforts and eliminating useless duplication. We have seen the futility of endeavoring to accomplish singly what can only come through coöperation. We have seen problems arise that fell within the province of none of the existing organizations, yet their solution was urgent. There was also the needless competition that came from knowing nothing of what the other group was doing; of planning alone what concerned the whole.

<sup>1</sup> With quotations from the Rev. Bernard Montgomery, President of the Council.

It was from such a background that the Sherwood Park Neighborhood Council arose.

The actual impetus which brought the Council into being was a meeting of the Parent-Teacher Association of Public School 14 at which the whole problem of our neighborhood conditions was faced courageously. At this meeting we were given a very comprehensive survey of our community by the assistant superintendent of elementary schools, which showed the great need for certain activities for several groups. We then had reports of what the various organizations already in the field were doing to correct the conditions discovered. We found that before we could adequately begin to correct conditions, we must unite our efforts.

Thus all the organizations were ready in March 1937 when the principal of the school sent out a call to all those interested in community planning. The fact that the organizations responded without a single exception showed that they were ready to go forward. The first meeting resulted in the appointment of a committee to frame a constitution and to nominate officers. A second meeting saw the constitution adopted and officers elected.

Our brief history has shown that the spirit of unity exists in our midst. It is because of this evident intention to coöperate which we see in all our groups that we are expecting great things in the future. We have already set up the machinery to further this undertaking through an exchange of information and the clearing of dates through a local coördinating committee. We hope to discover the most urgent needs of the community and, working through the existing organizations, set out to provide a solution for them.

The Council has appointed committees on membership, playgrounds, clearing of dates, welfare, and program. It helped to secure full-time library service and is petitioning to have the school building kept open for recreation four nights a week for evening classes. Neighborhood playgrounds and a traffic officer for the school corner are problems left for solution.

## MORSEMERE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 16

Julia Gregory, *Principal*

This area constitutes one of the most desirable residential sections of Yonkers; deluxe estates of millionaires, the Thompson and Untermeyer show places; the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research with its great gardens; and many attractive houses in less spacious settings. The sociological survey ranks it in the highest classification except for health. Many residents are leaders in industrial, social, and governmental affairs of city, county, and State. They are interested in the numerous organizations in the neighborhood: a civic association; six churches, Catholic and Protestant; two country clubhouses; a large active P. T. A.; and minor groups which meet for entertainment and study.

A neighborhood experience on a community project created a favorable mind-set for the organization of a council. A group of 30, representative of the section, met in December 1936, talked over its problems, planned a mass meeting, at which the Neighborhood Council was launched, sponsored by many of the most prominent citizens of the section.

The Council offices are filled respectively by a former majority leader of the Board of Supervisors, a former district attorney, an official in a local building firm, a parent, the P. T. A.'s president, the principal, and a doctor of research at Boyce Thompson Institute. The committees appointed are the following: environment: recreation space, safety, housing; adjustment: guidance, relief, health, adult education; character training: Scouts, clubs; Council activities: publicity, rules and regulations, ways and means; membership: research, fact finding, investigations, nominations, programs for Council.

At first it was felt that the neighborhood had few drawbacks but the Council is awakening to its problems among which are

traffic difficulties, lights, safety signs, police protection on the long steep Broadway incline, and trolley cars on the track terminus.

The Council discovered that even in a privileged influential neighborhood time and effort are necessary for the solution of problems. Slot machines in the small shops have disappeared because of Council agitation but eternal vigilance is needed for this problem. Council publicity has made local sellers of obscene literature cautious. Council meetings, speakers, projects, and publicity have attracted attention to the vital needs of the community. The leadership of the neighborhood, especially its man power, has been enlisted to improve the environment of the children. The Convention of Neighborhood Councils planned by our Council president stimulated greater activity in the community and city. Representation on the Yonkers Coördinating Council will give Morsemere direct contact with city-wide problems and break up its isolation.

Long-time plans of the council call for continued work on the Branch Public Library, additional recreational space and supervision, play space for small children, clearing of vacant lots and hills for recreation.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 21

Marion K. King

Due to the good which various communities were deriving from neighborhood councils, some of the citizens of Lincoln Park became interested in the movement.

It was decided that the type of neighborhood council should be one composed of representatives of the key organizations in the community. Hence the three churches in the community, the Civic Association, the Parent-Teacher Association, and the school were each to choose one or two representatives who were to meet and carry on any necessary business which might be taken up through the larger organization to benefit the community.

The purpose of the Council primarily was to bring about a closer coördination of efforts on the part of neighborhood organizations already set up. Four meetings were held last spring. The following list was drawn up as some of the needs of Lincoln Park:

1. Gaining an addition to Public School 24
2. Better transportation facilities
3. Further use of school building for children
4. Further use of school building for adults
5. Enforcement of speed and traffic laws
6. Provision of secondary-school facilities
7. An extension of organizations for children (Scouts)
8. An inventory of neighborhood experts for educational and recreational activity leadership
9. Consideration of street paving
10. Ridding newsstands of salacious literature
11. Better collection of garbage
12. Better sanitary conditions
13. Investigation of lighting problem
14. Investigation of assessed valuation of property

The members of the Neighborhood Council started work on these needs and feel that they have achieved something. In fact we now have better transportation facilities for pupils attending junior high school; we are making further use of the school building for both children and adults; and we are having an extension of organizations for children.

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 24

Lillian F. Morrow, *Principal*

In the sociological survey made in 1935, the neighborhood of Public School 24 stood in the third classification, next to the lowest, on all the sociological factors used except the stability of population in which it ranked in the fourth classification.

Lacking are sufficient social and recreational facilities for children and adults. There is no movie house, library, or adequate play-



ground for children and adults. Three churches and three political clubs afford the chief social outlets.

On February 5, 1937, 50 representative citizens met in the school and formed a Neighborhood Council. Officers were elected and these committees appointed: park improvement, bookmobile service, adult education, publicity, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, membership, and recreation. Among the objectives outlined were a community center for adult education and recreation, play spaces for children, a flooded area for skating, a closed street for coasting, changes in the playground adjoining the school, a bookmobile for the neighborhood, and full sidewalks for the school.

Through the efforts of the Council three aims were achieved: park improvement, bookmobile service, and full school sidewalks. In addition, the Council sponsored the Negro Jubilee Singers' concert and supported the Moffat Slum Clearance Bill.

This year, September 1937, the Council will emphasize adult education, increased play spaces, a closed street for coasting, a flooded area for skating, and afternoon programs for children supervised by the Recreation Commission.

The Neighborhood Council has awakened the people to the needs of their community and given leaders an opportunity to exercise their talents of leadership by helping the community to meet these problems. These leaders have helped to unify the neighborhood in an attempt to better it. The Council has developed a coöperative spirit between the school and the community and has expressed a willingness to promote every movement that concerns child welfare not only in its own neighborhood but in the city.

## THE JUNIOR COUNCILS OF THE YONKERS SCHOOLS

### JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 1

Dorothy Coufos, *Principal*

The Junior Council of Public School 1, organized in November 1936 to provide opportunities for child leadership in community problems, consists of representatives from fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. Officers were elected and committees for safety, health, social activities, and publicity were appointed. Monthly meetings are held.

Our Junior Council has many accomplishments: trips to the World Book Fair, museums, organization of Bingo parties, and a Safety Patrol with a record of not a single child injured during the school-building renovation last year. Council plans for this year call for improvement of neighborhood health conditions, clean-up drives, more Bingo parties, trips to interesting places, a safe Halloween, and a fire-prevention campaign. Public School 1 is proud of its Junior Council and its leadership. Its activities are followed by all the families of the neighborhood.

### JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 2

Gertrude Guiney, *Teacher Adviser to the Council*

The Junior Council of Public School 2 was organized from a group of 41 representatives from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades and special classes. Officers were elected and the following committees were appointed: safety patrol, boys' yards, girls' yards, side-walks, boys' toilet inspection, girls' toilet inspection, halls and stairs, roofs, anti-noise, art, and health. Our Junior Council meets every Friday for an hour.

Activities included: a vigilant campaign for safety, health, cleanliness, and respect for the rights of others; letters were sent to the mayor and public safety commissioner for police protection; letters

were sent to the mayor and the president of the library board for full-time library services; written invitations were sent to three Senior Council members to act as judges at our Pet Show, which was held during Youth Week; and written invitations were sent to parents and friends inviting them to the Junior Council Tea. New officers have been elected and installed with simple dignified exercises. This year the Junior Council plans for a vigorous health drive urging all children to have toxin-antitoxin, the Schick Test, and to have all physical defects corrected. The Council will continue to promote safety, cleanliness, and happiness.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 5

Ruth Freal, *Principal*

In September 1936 the 7A grade, a group of superior children, selected as its unit of study "Our Community." As an outgrowth of this study, a community consciousness was developed and a need for organized action arose. So the Public School 5 Junior Council was formed with this class in control. Members included representatives from grades 4 through 8. Officers were elected by the pupil members; *i.e.*, chairman, co-chairman, and secretary. The adult sponsor, the 7A class teacher, was elected executive secretary. The formation of a constitution and by-laws was next undertaken by this group and aims were formulated. Committees with activities are as follows:

*Recreation*: playgrounds, coasting, skating, beauty spots; *planning*: Boy Scout rally, Girl Scout rally, Brownies, Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., library, work and bookmobile clubs; *entertainment*: concerts, amateur hour, sick calls, senior dance, parties, pet show, evening meeting for parents, guest speakers for assembly; *safety*: safety play, safety devices for bicycles, safety talks, junior crusade, school safety lines; *health*: first aid, poison ivy, toxin-antitoxin interest; *publicity*: Junior Council paper, communications with civic leaders, radio programs and broadcast, Junior Council convention, talks to primary grades; *improvement*: lockers for gymnasium, memorial tree for yard.

The Junior Council achievements were numerous. The committees secured a coasting street; civic leaders for Youth Week; "cub" leaders; increased Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A. membership; play-room equipment and a new musical instrument from Senior Council; purchased a drum with funds raised by a Junior Council Amateur Hour; accepted encyclopedias from the chairman of Junior Council.

This Council coöperates with the Senior Council and provides valuable experiences for gifted students.

#### JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 6

Miss Aldanita Keough, *Primary Counselor*; Miss Eljah Parmerter, *Principal*; Miss Jessie Malcolm, *Intermediate Counselor*

On December 7, 1936, the Junior Council held its first meeting with two potential leaders from grades 1 to 6 represented. Their aim: "To make the community safer and better; to be good leaders, to learn how to work with others; to be more businesslike; to be better citizens when we grow up." The meetings were held once a week. Aids in parliamentary procedure were given when needed.

A committee from the Junior Council made a survey of the interests of the school children for Youth Week. This was their week and their chance to have those experiences they wanted. More desires were tabulated than could be gratified. After much discussion and planning a program evolved. The Junior Council members invited the Neighborhood Council to coöperate and to be their guest at a large neighborhood gathering where religious, civic, and social leaders spoke.

#### NODINE HILL JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 7

Georgia King Pearson, *Principal*

This student council was organized in April 1937. It is an active group of elected officers and appointed committees. The meetings afford opportunities for the pupils to discuss conditions in the neigh-

borhood which they could improve by their interest and work. Their chief projects are in promoting neighborhood and school safety and in working for increased recreational opportunities for the school.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 8

Billy Netter, *Council Member, Grade 6*

Our Junior Council was organized in April 1937. The aim of the Council is to acquaint ourselves with the needs of our neighborhood and school and to make ourselves and others more active citizens so that we can do something about these needs.

During Youth Week of last spring, a committee of three boys from our school attended a convention of the Yonkers Junior Councils. I was a member of that committee. Our committee thought the reports of the various councils good and very interesting and we reported all we had seen and heard to the classes at Public School 8.

Our classmates suggested that we go to our principal and ask if we could have a junior council. After talking it over it was decided to have two representatives from each grade from the third through the sixth meet with the Civic Club of Public School 8 and change the name to Junior Council of Public School 8.

We held that first important meeting April 30, 1937. At the meeting a committee was appointed to write a constitution for the Junior Council; also a committee on safety and a committee on health was appointed. A week later a special meeting was called and we had the constitution read. As it was all right, it was accepted. Then things began to happen. A drive for greater safety on the highways, in the halls, and on the playground was begun. Then a big drive for greater safety in the spring and summer activities. Last of all a drive for 100 per cent inoculation against diphtheria in our neighborhood was made. A committee was also appointed to help the P.T.A. get names of preschool children and distribute health letters to their parents.

This fall we had our first meeting on September 17. We have elected officers and appointed the following committees: health, safety, and radio, and we have given a fire-prevention program. Public School 8 has a regular Junior Council and what is more it is working and we will be at the convention next spring carrying a banner.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 9

Walter Russbach, *President, Grade 6*

On March 19, 1937, delegates from all grades, except the kindergarten, met to discuss the forming of a new council. Having read and heard about other school councils, we decided we wanted one, too. It was unanimously voted to form a council to make Public School 9 a happier place to live in, and to help the children to be good citizens of Yonkers. We learned to conduct our meetings according to parliamentary law and then our Junior Council began its work.

Safety was our first problem. A committee was appointed to take over the indoor and outdoor patrol duties and to report to the Council suggestions for safeguarding our schoolmates. We have had no accidents since the committee began its work. The Council organized and sponsored clubs; petitioned the mayor and aldermen to keep the public library open on Saturdays and to give us bookmobile service.

Our greatest problem is our playground. Our yard needs grading and resurfacing to make it safe. We have asked to have this work done and are hopeful of results. Another neighborhood problem we have taken up is inoculation against diphtheria. Our Council has started a drive to help our principal make our neighborhood one hundred per cent in this matter.

Public School 9 Council has an emblem, a banner, a song, and colors. We are young, but we are growing.



JUNIOR NEIGHBORHOOD ALUMNI COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 12

Agnita C. Wallace, *Principal*

The principal began community organization with the children. Large groups of youths frequented the streets at night. They were invited as former pupils of the school to form an alumni group. Two hundred and fifty youths, ages from sixteen to twenty-five, arrived at the first meeting, October 5, 1936. Two groups under co-chairmen were formed and became the Junior Neighborhood Alumni Council. They wanted dramatic activities and social dancing. An average of ninety to one hundred and twenty-five young people attended the weekly meetings.

There are four committees: (1) *government*: which sees that rooms and materials are left in good order after the night's fun; (2) *publicity*: which gets good space for the reports it submits to the daily paper; (3) *membership*: this committee was substituted for the two "bouncers" that the Council officers recommended; (4) *program*: sponsors activities.

The Council discovered its own leadership—a tap-dancing teacher and a social dancing teacher, also a piano player—all on the age level of the group. A minstrel show culminated the year's activities. Three boys wrote the libretto; singers and dancers were drawn from the Council. Some of the money received from the minstrel show was used to replace games for the school playroom used by this Council. A phonograph has been presented to the school by the alumnus who is the chairman of the program committee.

The first year of its existence the Junior Neighborhood Alumni Council danced; learned "new steps"; presented amateur hours; listened to the victrola or radio between dances; enjoyed games and the library corner.

Space is the greatest need. This year the gymnasium will be available. Chaperonage is another problem. The question of direction,

with due care to preserve the maximum of initiative, is a difficult one.

The great value is to the youths themselves who are off the street. One night a week is wholesomely occupied; their desires for entertainment and companionship are at least partially satisfied, with opportunities aplenty for coöperation and leadership in a decent if limited environment.

JUNIOR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 12

Catherine Martin and Eleanore Bremner, *Grade Teachers*

The Junior Neighborhood Council of Public School 12 was organized February 25, 1937, to acquaint our school children with neighborhood needs. The usual officers preside over weekly meetings. The 51 members are divided into committees: the nominating committee found the likeliest candidates for each office; the health committee inspects classmates twice daily to improve school and neighborhood health; the safety committee gives safety information, its A. B. C. groups (Always Be Careful) act as traffic guards; the radio committee lists radio selections for all grades.

The Council's achievements are: successfully petitioning the mayor for a full library schedule; attending the first Junior Council convention; composing the Council song; keeping records of Junior Council work; securing a nurse to talk on first aid; making a trip to a fire house; and sponsoring a high-school band concert.

The new plans are: forming kindness to animals, attendance, and reading committees; a Clean Your Neighborhood Campaign; and a Safety Campaign. Great improvements in safety, neighborhood sanitation, and general health practices have accrued from Council activities.

The Council members now have gained poise, public-speaking ability, and confidence in expressing their opinions. Best of all the Council has substituted a system of rewards for former condemnation and penalties.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 14

Elizabeth M. Elliot, *Principal*

The Junior Council of Public School 14 was formed in February 1937 for the purpose of reorganizing clubs in the junior-high-school department and solving other school problems. Membership consisted of twenty-two children—three from each junior-high class, two from each fifth and sixth, and one from each fourth-grade chosen by their classmates to represent them on the Council.

The speech made by the president, Robert Roth, grade 8, at the Junior Council Convention explains the council's activities:

The Junior Council of Public School 14 accomplished the following between February and June 1937:

1. Clubs have been reorganized.
2. A letter has been written to the Municipal Recreation Department asking for a playground supervisor.
3. The owner of prospective playground space was interviewed by a committee.
4. An emblem contest was conducted and an emblem chosen for the Junior Council.
5. A contest for words for a Council song was carried on. The verse was chosen. The music will be written in September 1937.
6. A scrapbook, a banner, and an exhibit of Council work has been made.
7. Photographs of Council members and their activities have been taken by the Council.
8. Youth Week was planned and the activities were carried out by the Council committees.

At the first meeting in September 1937 it was decided to (1) send the president to the organization meeting of the Student Council of Public School 4; (2) send a representative to the Milk Conference at Public School 17; (3) write music for the Council song; (4) work to secure afterschool supervision of the playgrounds and to secure additional neighborhood playgrounds; (5) amend the constitution according to needs; and (6) have an Amateur Hour to raise funds for Council use.

The Junior Council has come to mean a great deal to Public School 14. Children suggest problems freely and think that the Junior Council is the proper place to present their difficulties. The Council members feel the responsibility of thinking through the problems and reaching a conclusion satisfactory to all and beneficial to the school.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 17

Mildred Smith, *Principal*

The Junior Council of Public School 17 was organized the first week in February 1937. The aim of this Council is to promote better health in our community. We think health is the most essential factor in our lives. Our meetings are held the second and fourth Friday of each month. At present we have five active committees: sanitation, home cleanliness, refreshment, community health, and milk campaign. The group consists of 33 members from grade 7, 3 delegates each from grades 3, 4, and 5, and 6 delegates from the two sixth grades, totaling 59.

The Council made its own book containing activity data. Committees visited a city bathhouse, bakery, and fire station for information concerning care in sanitation. A visiting nurse attended one meeting, explaining first aid in the home. A local doctor gave an interview concerning inoculation and vaccination. A committee made a drive on poison ivy using posters, letters, and speeches. We sent nineteen delegates, six posters, and our Council banner to the May Junior Council Convention. There, our miniature model house was also displayed, showing cleanliness in the home.

Health is again our objective this fall. We are stressing greater use of milk as a health aid. Our milk unit is to have the Yonkers Health Commissioner as our guest speaker. The girls are serving refreshments at each P.T.A. meeting, the menus being based upon milk, such as tapioca pudding, cocoa, etc. The Council is continuing a yearbook. Next February, our aim will stress safety as a major branch in the study of good health.

This activity has developed in the students coöperation, personality, a better vocabulary, and improvement in the social arts. It has brought the neighborhood into closer relationship with the school. Its reaction on the school has been an increasing activity in outside affairs, giving students a keener interest in their surroundings and arousing a better school spirit.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 20

Peter Kurilecz, *Secretary, Fifth Grade*

The first Junior Council meeting of Public School 20 was held May 6, 1937. The Council voted to appoint a diphtheria prevention committee. The committee members were sent to tell the parents to have their children given toxin-antitoxin. The committee told the parents to go to their own doctor if they could afford it or to the free clinic in City Hall if they could not pay a doctor. The committee got names and addresses of the families that have children under the age of five years from the teachers. The per cent of the whole school protected before the committee was appointed was 92.7 per cent; after the committee got through it was 94 per cent.

JUNIOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 22

Rocco E. Rescigno, *Principal*

The Public School 22 Junior Community Council was formed last March for the purpose of making each pupil in the school aware of his social and civic responsibilities, and, secondly, of making the school a happier and better place in which to live. A representative assembly was convened and the purposes and functions of a junior council were explained to the student body. A simple parliamentary procedure was adopted and a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer were elected.

Many educative and enriching experiences accrue to the individual and collective students as a result of Junior Council member-

ship. A seventh-grade pupil, president of the Junior Council last year, says:

The Council is organized into clubs and committees which handle the problems that come up for attention. The children join the group in whose work they are interested and where they feel that they may be of help. Active committees include: the dramatic club, the art club, the music committee, the radio programs committee, the tree and bird committee, the pet committee, the hobby and club committee, the student patrol, the bookmobile committee, Professor Quiz committee, the library committee, the bulletin committee, the courtesy committee, the know your city committee, and the Youth Week committee.

Renewed interest and a greater understanding of the purposes of the Junior Council were manifested early in the present school year. Reorganization quickly took place and ambitious plans were projected for the coming months. These include a Junior Council newspaper; Council sponsorship of American Education Week; the direction and management of the school store; greater responsibility for general school assemblies; the organization of a school band; and a drive to make the entire community Junior Council conscious.

In the opinion of principal and teachers, the Junior Council gives to pupils many educative experiences and opportunities for growth. Active participation in real life situations of the Junior Council offers opportunities for citizenship training and lays a foundation for intelligent adult participation in the affairs of the municipality, State, and nation.

JUNIOR NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 23

Edith D. Hartley, *Principal*

How it all came about. News of the first Junior Neighborhood Council Convention filled the air last March. The children at Public School 23 were not to be left out of this big Youths' Week event. Presto! They changed their Service League into a Junior Council and succeeded in sending representatives to the convention.



Organization changed. League officers retired. Council officers were elected.

Membership changed. Sixth-grade children formed the League. Representatives from twelve classroom groups (3B to 6A inclusive) made up the Junior Council.

Aims changed. The League worked to make the school a good school for the neighborhood. The Council considered it equally important to make the neighborhood a happier place for all to live in.

Management changed. The League was directed by teachers or older children. The "give-and-take" discussions of Council meetings now help children to think and plan together concerning how things should be done.

Planning changed. The League made its own plans, but to plan under the Council involved consultation with many people. Advice and assistance must be sought for in the community.

Activities expanded. They were coördinated (a new, hard word but wonderful to understand). Activities for the good of the school made fine neighborhood projects.

Tangible values achieved. Friendliness and neighborhood tolerance extended through activities: slingshots and guns were banished; stone-throwing feuds are past; assistance was volunteered to police, shopkeepers, and school authorities; high-school boys and others were reported to authorities for injury to property.

Plans for the year. A study of parts of the Constitution of the United States dealing with rights, privileges, and responsibilities for the purpose of forming a constitution for the Council; to make plans for National Education Week; launch hobbies in school and community; to stimulate enthusiasm for better schoolwork; to make this year's motto for Book Week come true at Public School 23, "Reading, the Magic Highway to Adventure"; to plan and organize "drives" when necessary to secure desired goals.

In conclusion. The neighborhood belonging to Public School 23

is a little city in itself composed of all kinds of people, from all kinds of homes, with all kinds of problems. It is, therefore, a splendid place for Council members to learn to think, act, and plan for the good of all. We are having fun doing this. Wish us luck!

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 24

Helen Symington, *President, Sixth Grade*

When our Neighborhood Council first met, some of us from the grammar grades acted as ushers and stayed through the meeting. Our parents wanted to have the park next to our school improved and get a bookmobile to stop in the neighborhood. Our grade had made two models of that park, one as it was and one as we thought it should be. We showed these models at the Neighborhood Council meeting. Our models were made for a meeting on housing held by the Yonkers Coördinating Council and the Yonkers Council of Parents and Teachers.

It was the Neighborhood Council that gave us the idea of a Junior Council. We wanted to help our parents with the park and the bookmobile. So we decided to organize a Junior Council. Our first meeting was on February 8, 1937. Twenty-four children elected from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades organized the Council. We elected officers and decided to have weekly meetings. Our aim was to help our school and community.

We worked through committees. The park committee helped to get the park improved. The recreation committee bought a shuffleboard set, a camera, and garden seeds with money earned from a candy sale. The safety committee helped patrol the schoolyards and escorted the small children across the streets at dismissals. The art committee painted the scenery for our school play. The bookmobile committee helped to get the bookmobile to stop in our neighborhood.

Our honorary members are the Mayor of Yonkers, a member of the Board of Education, a college professor, the superintendents

and directors of our school system, and our school custodian who helps us with everything.

JUNIOR COUNCIL, PUBLIC SCHOOL 25

Irwin Pless, *Chairman, Sixth Grade*

This is how the Junior Council of Public School 25 started. Our school gave a play in the kindergarten for parents. It was so crowded the school realized its need for an auditorium. The Junior Council was formed to obtain our needs.

Officers were elected. These committees were formed: school improvement, social planning, publicity, recreation, health, and safety.

Our major problem is to secure an auditorium and a gymnasium. We investigated a mansion on our school property. We found the cost of remodeling too great.

We have a well-organized newspaper, a constitution, and a court. The social planning committee formed many clubs which promoted a friendly spirit.

Parents now were asking, "What is this Junior Council we are hearing so much about?" The Council explained their aims and purposes at a meeting. The parents became as enthusiastic as the children. Our principal said to our parents:

"The Council has been a great value. Our children now realize that they are a part of the community and have a part in its work. It has made leaders and shown each child that he too can be a leader. We find children evaluating themselves as to the requirements of the Council. Discipline has been improved by more student government and the school has been put on a better social basis. Best of all the community has been made aware of our needs and more desirous to give service."

## THE FIRST JUNIOR COUNCIL CONVENTION

Leona E. Stanton, *Teacher Adviser, Public School 5*

The first Junior Council Convention was held on May 11, 1937, as a major part of the Youth Week program in Yonkers. Approximately four hundred delegates from the thirteen junior councils, banners flying, assembled in the auditorium of the Administration Building for a discussion of their particular problems and to exchange ideas as to the best solution for them.

The auditorium was decorated with colorful posters and many interesting exhibits of council activities were displayed.

The Convention was called to order by a general chairman, an eleven-year-old student of the Public School 5 Council, who formally opened the convention and introduced the guests. The Mayor of Yonkers, in his address to the children, said, "I regret that we cannot grant all the requests that come to my office from your Council members but I advise you to be patient and *persistent* and slowly these things will be added to our community life."

Each of the thirteen councils was represented by a chairman seated on the platform, who, in turn, presented the history, the development, and problems of his particular Junior Council.

The major problems discussed were: eradication of poison ivy; bicycle safety devices; rerouting of bookmobile; the evaluation of radio programs; guards for coasting streets; the flooding of tennis courts for skating; the search for play spaces; the forming of "special-interest" clubs; and the need of school safety patrols.

At the close, the Councils voted to make the Junior Council Convention an annual event.

## THE YONKERS COÖRDINATING COUNCIL IN THE YONKERS PLAN

BERTHA SMITH

*Assistant Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools*

### NEED FOR THE COUNCIL

When a child becomes a delinquent every available social force can be marshalled to help him, but no organization exists which coördinates the efforts of all groups to keep the child out of court. Society works in reverse when it comes to child welfare. It should be the other way; all agencies should work together in the child's behalf before he gets into trouble. Delinquency should be prevented. Every child should have the opportunity to enjoy a normal, healthy, wholesome childhood.

The speech in which Judge Smyth of the Westchester County Children's Court presented these facts to the Yonkers Council of Parents and Teachers was the steppingstone to the present Yonkers Coördinating Council. Thereafter, in January 1936, the president of the Council of Parents and Teachers, two members of the Board of Education, a principal, and the director of guidance formed a discussion group which met each month with the judge of Westchester County Children's Court to consider a comprehensive program of child care and protection, and the relation of this problem to a coördinating council. Gradually representatives of various organizations and agencies joined in the discussion.

In May 1936, the sociological survey, made through the coöperative effort of a school study group and described in the first section of this article, was presented at one of the meetings in the judge's chambers. The findings, showing actual community conditions and problems, together with information about the neighborhood councils already operating in Yonkers, brought to a focus the felt need for the proposed coördinating council. A committee selected from both groups, with the assistant superintendent of elementary

schools as chairman, was appointed to work out details of organization and in November 1936 the Yonkers Coördinating Council came into existence.

#### MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

At that time there were already three neighborhood councils, not quite a year old, operating programs of considerable worth. Through the stimulation of the school study group and the publicity in connection with the programs of the Yonkers Coördinating Council and the existing local units, the number of neighborhood councils increased to ten, all represented on the central Coördinating Council, with several others pending in various stages of evolution. Numerous junior councils, too, sprang up in the schools. The central Coördinating Council, therefore, rests on a broad neighborhood base, which situation is the initial strength of the Yonkers plan. This desirable factor, together with its wide representative membership, gives the Yonkers Coördinating Council promising assurance of success.

Very important is the enthusiastic following from educational circles; for, since the Coördinating Council is fundamentally concerned with children, its roots must reach deep into the school system; otherwise it will lack vital contact with the realities for which it exists. Since school groups, through their studies, took a major part in the new community movement, there was unusual readiness for the increased social participation offered by the central council. A large number of school persons promptly joined the Yonkers Coördinating Council: the four superintendents, the twenty-six elementary principals, the vice-principals, the nine directors, five high-school principals, the principal of the continuation school, one teacher representative from each school and many special teachers, two Board of Education members, representatives from the Yonkers Teachers' Association, the Yonkers Principals' Association, the Primary Teachers' Council, the Special Class Teach-



ers Council, and the P.T.A.'s. It is evident that the schools are solidly behind the Coördinating Council.

There is valuable representation from other sources: the city departments of welfare, health, safety, recreation, city planning; the children's court, the probation department; the public library; the Chamber of Commerce; the N.Y.A.; Yonkers Academy of Medicine; Y.M.C.A.; Salvation Army; Visiting Nurses Association; D. A. R.; Women's Institute; Sunshine Society; Jewish community center; service clubs; County Motion Picture Council; Protestant Big Sisters; Catholic Big Sisters; the Catholic School Board sends an observer to the meetings; interested persons include the city and county judges, a senator, many business men, clergy from all denominations, the assistant editor of the local paper, and many others. The membership stands at about two hundred.

#### ORGANIZATION

The six officers, four delegates, and committee chairmen constitute the Board of Governors. The chairman of the Council is the judge of the Westchester County Children's Court; the vice-chairman, the commissioner of public welfare. Other officers include the president of the Yonkers Council of Parents and Teachers, the assistant public librarian, the assistant superintendent of elementary schools, director of the N.Y.A. Delegates are the vice-president of the Yonkers Academy of Medicine, the commissioner of public safety, the president of the Yonkers Teachers Association, and the assistant superintendent of secondary schools.

Committees and chairmen are as follows:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Research: executive secretary,<br>Jewish community center | 4. Domestic relations: representa-<br>tive of Protestant Big Sisters |
| 2. Guidance: school director of<br>guidance                  | 5. Health: to be filled  |
| 3. Education: college professor                              | 6. Recreation: chairman, recrea-<br>tion commission                  |

7. Library: public library head
8. Motion picture: County Motion Picture Council president
9. Vocational: assistant superintendent of vocational education
10. Literature: local priest
11. Housing: planning director
12. Legislation: city judge
13. Field leaders: director of adult education
14. Contact: local rabbi
15. Ways and means: Board of Education member
16. Membership: county judge
17. Rules: director of Westchester County Probation
18. Press: member, Lion's Club
19. Nominating: city probation department
20. Placement: director of NYA

Many of the working members of the Council are leaders of important key activities of the community. The caliber of the membership is significant in that it indicates the quality of persons who are desirous of participating in a movement to better the lives of children and youth.

The Board of Governors meets monthly and acts as the steering committee. The Council meets either as a unit when important questions need discussion or in conjunction with any agency which is holding a public meeting on the topic of current interest to the Council.

#### PROGRAM

What achievements should be expected of an organization one year old? The Council's first regular meeting initiated its program. One hundred and fifty members with special speakers discussed the problems of recreation and the menace of obscene literature, city-wide issues that the neighborhood councils had submitted among many others to the Coördinating Council for immediate attention.

Suggested surveys and long-time consideration of scope and plans were temporarily postponed. The Council committees spent the first year working on problems acute in the minds of the groups which appealed to the Council for aid.

*Special Committee on Psychiatric Unit for Public Schools.* Before the Coördinating Council was formally organized, a committee of its prospective members was appointed to consider the establishment of a psychiatric unit in the school system and to join with other groups in presenting the matter to the Board of Education. When the educational budget is available it is expected that a beginning in this direction will be made.

*The Committee on Recreation* is investigating possibilities for more recreation space and play supervision. Vacant lots, plots on which the city has liens, changes in present playgrounds, a larger recreational city budget, more school community centers, volunteer leaders, and a survey of present resources are the items receiving attention.

*The Committee on Obscene Literature* is under the guidance of the clergy of the Catholic Church which denomination has long waged systematic war against this insidious evil. Through the Parents and Teachers Council, machinery was set in motion which effectively changed a local publication.

*The Committee on Housing*, under the director of the City Planning Commission, has been active on: the new local ordinance recently passed which permits the Yonkers Building Department to repair at the owner's expense or to demolish houses when the owner fails to make repairs in accordance with the terms of the new regulations; the Wagner Bill which will give Yonkers Federal aid for a low-cost housing experiment; and the New York State Moffat Bill which was pending in the legislature and which carried a plan for slum clearance. In this connection the Coördinating Council attended the meetings of the Yonkers Council of Parents and Teachers at which time a public presentation of Yonkers's need for slum clearance, low-cost housing, and suggestions for first steps in betterment were made. Out of this meeting grew support for local, State, and Federal housing legislation and also a recommendation that a plan for a Yonkers Tenement Committee be sponsored by a private

agency to help stricter enforcement of local regulations. Yonkers is understaffed as to building inspectors. With such a committee poor housing would be quickly improved.

*Placement Committee.* The Coördinating Council through a public program in behalf of the Yonkers NYA stressed the problem of unemployed youth, and the need for apprenticeship measures and a junior placement officer in Yonkers from the Division of Placement and Employment Insurance of the State Department of Labor. There is promise that an employment branch for Yonkers will be established.

*The Motion Picture Committee* is alert to the danger of hasty local action on legislation in relation to the attendance of children at Yonkers motion-picture houses.

*The Educational Committee* has the responsibility of keeping the Council and the public informed concerning Council functions and projects by arranging programs for public meetings and by supplying speakers for inquiring groups. There is a constant call for speakers from neighborhood councils, P.T.A.'s, and unorganized groups to present the findings of the sociological survey to each ecological area; to interpret the function of neighborhood councils; and to explain their relations to the work of the Yonkers Coördinating Council. Excellent publicity has stimulated interest in this community movement; but an immense amount of work remains to be done to clarify the ideas of the public. Many more informed speakers are needed for this important task.

*The Legislation Committee's* recommendations included the support of two bills pending in the State legislature: State aid for kindergartens which would add \$68,000 to the Yonkers budget, and an amendment to the law governing liabilities of the Board of Education which would free teachers from liability for children's accidents, now passed.

Other activities of the Coördinating Council were as follows: public meetings, one with the Yonkers Teachers Association to pub-

licize information on the Child Labor Amendment; another to present the findings of a local survey of the local movie problem; and during Youth Week a campaign was supported on "Give Youth A Job" with excellent results.

The Council will add to its program this year, the second in its existence, a plan for the support of additional high-school buildings including additional space for acute vocational needs.

#### EVALUATION

The initial program of the Yonkers Coördinating Council, perhaps, may not deal with the great fundamental social issues. The Council realizes with proper humility that it has embarked on an experimental path; that it must, therefore, feel its way; that new techniques must be evolved to accomplish the difficult work of coördination. But Council committees are active and report regularly to the Board of Governors on the common, acute community problems they have undertaken, most of which are in proper areas for first persistent efforts toward solution.

There is plenty of work for the Council to do. It is true that there are many efficient agencies and organizations, both public and private, in Yonkers, giving heroic service, some of which are more or less coördinated in effort; but the complicated social scene consists of hundreds of unsolved problems. Thousands of children are miserably housed and lack recreational facilities for wholesome childhood; delinquency; relief; unemployment; low wages; race prejudice; youth problems. The list is endless! To those working with children in congested neighborhoods the cry of duplication and overorganization seems beside the mark. Conditions demand workers. There is room for hundreds of groups who are willing to forget themselves in service for the children and youth in our city. With informed, unselfish, widespread service will come a worth-while citizenry; continued social neglect will end in chaos.

One of the most valuable contributions that the Council has made

so far is its effect on public awareness of community problems. The nucleus of community-minded persons in each district, organized for coöperative community effort, and the publicity the central and neighborhood councils have enjoyed are leavening the lump of public indifference. There is hardly an edition of the local newspaper which does not note some council activities. Never has so much news space been so steadily devoted to unselfish community effort. Never have so many Yonkers people, all at the same time, been intent on common neighborhood problems. Public officials are alert to the reiteration of people's expressed interests. Organizations have speeded up their services to the community. The new Building Ordinance was passed so promptly that agencies could not move fast enough to offer support; the Recreation Commission is more active than ever searching for recreational space; the Boy Scout organization requests a school survey in regard to the adequacy of service in relation to various age groups; at each meeting of the Common Council, aldermen vigorously demand more parks and play spaces, closed coasting streets, and patrol protection for their respective wards. Groups are actively fulfilling neighborhood needs: one P.T.A. has arranged the lease of the Christian Science Church site to the city for \$1.00 on condition that it be equipped as a local playground for small children; another P.T.A. has provided game and play material for adult recreation in its school center; the colored Civic Forum established a gameroom in an underprivileged area and is preparing to launch three additional game centers in different sections. For the first time in the history of Yonkers, no delinquency cases have been reported at court for three consecutive weeks. It may be assumed that this result is due in some measure to the widespread drive to better the environments that condition child behavior. The organization of neighborhood councils seems contagious; each neighborhood is alert as to what adjacent areas are doing. The traditional school isolation is permanently broken.



Many of the educational staff are sensitively aware of the community, its needs, its composition in terms of individual persons.

The Yonkers Coördinating Council, itself, unmistakably furnishes a needed channel for community participation. The proof lies in the outstanding response to membership invitation; a city-wide heartening affirmation that scores of busy leaders are willing to take on additional burdens in the hope that through the Council increasingly effective service will be secured for the children of Yonkers.

This city-wide Coördinating Council plays an important role in the Yonkers plan. It makes possible the reciprocal flow of opinion and action, to and fro, from the neighborhood councils, which supply points on the periphery of the community to the coördinating center.

After a year's work, the Coördinating Council has been able to clarify its objectives, to indicate its scope, to emphasize its coördinating function, and to formulate its relationships with the existing organizations of Yonkers.

Probably the greatest value of any plan of community coördination is inherent in the socializing process itself more than in the objective outcomes. The Yonkers plan offers a democratic path to social planning for the benefit of the children of the community.

## THE COÖRDINATION OF EDUCATION AND THE COMMUNITY

JULIUS YOURMAN

*New York University School of Education; Adviser,  
Yonkers Coördinating Project*

When the school accepts the role of a social agency the purpose of the curriculum changes to that of bringing about desirable changes in individuals and in the community. The new role makes it necessary for schools to discover community resources and problems and then provide a sequence of experiences to utilize and meet the revealed conditions. The school program and resources and the community program and resources are fused in a continuous process of mutual assistance to meet common needs.

The following brief reports indicate that the elementary schools of Yonkers are seeking to make effective their dual objective—"to help children to know, to live, and to grow" and "to make Yonkers a better place for all."

### INVENTORY OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES OF YONKERS

Lucy A. Glasier, *Public School 3 Annex*, and Helen H. Ramsay,  
*Public School 11*

Yonkers and its vicinity are rich in historical resources but no inventory was available until the research here described furnished a wealth of fascinating data.

A teacher committee contacted the local D.A.R. group which had furnished markers for the county's most important historical spots, and studied records on file at the Historical Society of White Plains and at our own Manor Hall.

A valuable trail map of historic Yonkers was prepared and it will be printed for the use of schools and interested persons.

## YONKERS MOVIE INVESTIGATION

Directed by Olga Schlobohm, *Department of Psychology*

The purpose of the Yonkers movie investigation, recently completed, was to furnish teachers and parents with first-hand contact and specific information regarding the Yonkers movie situation and its effects on our Yonkers children. The purpose was twofold: (1) through the reaction engendered by this local homemade movie investigation to stimulate responsible groups to plan a curriculum to guide children's movie experiences; (2) to secure parental coöperation to bring about the desired ends.

*This movie survey was a coöperative undertaking* carried out by a voluntary group of 55 teachers from 19 elementary schools and a committee of 24 P.T.A. members under the chairmanship of the assistant superintendent of elementary schools, and under the direction of the school psychologist.

The investigation was carried on through three projects:

1. A pupil-movie interview questionnaire administered to 1,300 children by teachers to discover the children's usual movie attendance and the effect of Yonkers movies in terms of health, sleep, play habits, emotional and behavior reactions.
2. A week-end observation of the 10 Yonkers movie theaters by 24 P.T.A. members and 51 teachers to evaluate independently the film offerings, to observe children's attendance, to observe physical conditions of the theaters.
3. A week-end count of all the Yonkers elementary-school children who attended the Yonkers movies.

The findings of the Yonkers movie investigation parallel the Payne Fund data but our own local study brought intense personal reactions to the teachers and parents participating. It was found that 80 per cent of the feature films and 63 per cent of the trailers observed were unsuitable for age groups attending. Thirty-one per cent of the films had crime motives. Both parent and teacher observers rated the unsuitable films as too emotionally stimulating;

too much killing and drinking; too many gruesome accidents; distorted information. Parents' and teachers' ratings coincided closely with authoritative film appraisals.

The findings in regard to children's attendance show that out of 11,538 elementary-school children 32 per cent attended the Yonkers movies over the week-end. This number would have been larger had there not been many competitive activities that week-end for children. In most theaters 75 per cent of the Saturday afternoon audience consisted of children, seemingly under 16 years old, who stayed long after the supper hour; 25 per cent stayed to see the feature film twice; 9 per cent to see it three times; 20 per cent of the children went unaccompanied by adults.

Of the 1,300 children interviewed, 42 per cent reported that they had been frightened and 33 per cent had bad dreams relating to movies seen; 80 per cent had play interests based on films featuring crime motives; 10 to 33 per cent of the children who manifested health, behavior, and study problems were attending unsuitable movies.

Parents and teachers reported that the physical aspects of some of the theaters needed improvement and that great numbers of unaccompanied young children seated promiscuously or massed in sections constituted a fire, panic, and moral hazard.

From this investigation came definite results. Curriculum plans were made through which children's movie experiences were guided. Plans were carried out by schools to stimulate parental responsibility and to secure parental coöperation for the purpose of guiding individual children who presented specific problems growing out of unfavorable movie contacts.

P.T.A., school, and other groups publicized the local movie findings to arouse public opinion and to change parental attitudes in relation to the movie problem affecting their children. The movie findings were presented to the Yonkers Coördinating Council, P.T.A. groups in Yonkers and adjoining communities, and were

published in a local Y.W.C.A. *Bulletin* and in the *Primary Teachers Council News*.

Plans are being made by the Parents and Teachers Council to organize a permanent advisory movie committee to coöperate with the schools: (1) to provide a monthly movie calendar; (2) to study the matron plan; (3) to help schools acquire movie equipment; (4) to publicize the movie-investigation findings.

#### THE YONKERS RADIO INVESTIGATION

Directed by Betty B. Frye, *Psychologist, Yonkers Public Schools*

An investigation of the present educational and social problem, the radio, has been made under the direction of the department of psychology in connection with the elementary-school curriculum, at the request of the Primary Teachers Council and the assistant superintendent of Yonkers schools.

The purpose of the radio investigation was to learn radio content, the time and amount of listening, the programs listened to, and the effects of radio listening on our school children. These phases of the radio problem must be known in order that children's radio experiences may be guided. For the investigation, the psychological department prepared a pupil and a parent interview questionnaire through which the radio habits of 1,728 elementary-school children in twenty-four elementary schools were learned. Seventy-one teachers and supervisors participated in the study with the coöperation of twenty-four P.T.A. members representing nine Yonkers P.T.A. groups. The investigation also included an evaluation by teachers and parents of the six most prominent radio stations for Yonkers radio listeners. Thus the parents' point of view on their children's radio problems is being made available to teachers. Parent coöperation in guiding children's radio experiences will thus be assured.

The investigation revealed that: (1) 98 per cent of children owned radios; (2) 97½ per cent liked to listen to the radio; (3) 74 per

cent listened an hour or more daily. The investigation shows also that acute problems for many children grow out of the effects of undesirable programs and wrong listening habits as to time and amount.

64 per cent of the fifty-eight programs most widely heard frighten children by their own reports. Table I indicates how Program A effects large numbers of children in our different school grades.

TABLE I

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Per Cent Listened</i>	<i>Per Cent Reported Fright</i>
I	50	4
II	51	19
III	54	11
Upper	66	23

Yet Program B (Table II) and Program C (Table III), although starred for desirability, have much smaller audiences because one is not well known by our children and the other comes at a poor hour.

TABLE II

Program B, A starred program not well enough known to Yonkers Children

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Per Cent Listened</i>
I	18
II	20
III	12
Upper	0

TABLE III

Program C, A starred program at a poor hour

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Per Cent Listened</i>
I	8
II	13
III	12
Upper	3



Table IV shows types of behavior problems arising from wrong radio listening either in time, amount, or content of program. Children hurry their meals, neglect play, and become problem children through overinterest in radio.

TABLE IV

	<i>Grade I Per Cent</i>	<i>Grade II Per Cent</i>	<i>Grade III Per Cent</i>	<i>Upper Grades Per Cent</i>	<i>Total Per Cent</i>
<i>Number of Children . . . .</i>	363	529	515	321	1,728
Eating problems . . . . .	15	16	16	30	23
Sleeping problems . . . . .	20	21	16	9	18
Lack outdoor work and play .	2	2	3	1	2
Lack indoor work and play .	1	3	2	—	2
Behavior (conduct) . . . . .	13	13	15	16	14

The data gathered through the survey point to the fact that our children need radio guidance and for these purposes: (1) teachers are making curriculum plans that will assure radio guidance to the children in their charge; (2) a handbook of desirable current radio programs for in-school and out-of-school listening is being prepared by school and P.T.A. groups; (3) parental coöperation is being enlisted to care for individual children with problems growing out of wrong listening habits.

A permanent radio council is being organized by the Parents and Teachers Council to coöperate with school groups by: (1) providing a monthly calendar listing approved radio offerings; (2) by contacting sources of radio programs and registering approval or disapproval; (3) by encouraging schools to acquire radio equipment for educational and recreational use; (4) by publicizing the findings of the radio investigators to awaken parental and community responsibility.

## STUDY OF THE DIET OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Alvina H. Diehl, *Teacher, Public School 20*

The plan included a survey of foods used by our children and a study of poorly balanced diets.

Our school has found from experience that a questionnaire either filled out at school or sent home in our foreign neighborhood does not produce accurate results when food is the topic.

In the study here outlined the teachers used a different approach to secure information. The subject was broached in a casual way making certain, however, that important questions were answered by all children. The findings of this informal survey are given in the table below.

DIET HABITS OF 162 CHILDREN, PUBLIC SCHOOL 20

	<i>Drink Tea or Coffee</i>	<i>Drink too Little Milk</i>	<i>Eat In- adequate Breakfast</i>	<i>Eat Fruit</i>	<i>Eat Cereal</i>	<i>Eat Cake for Break- fast</i>	<i>Eggs in Regular Diet</i>
Number . .	58	89	55	65	50	42	19
Per cent . .	36	55	33	40	30	26	11

A weight chart was made showing that out of 375 children 85 were 7 per cent underweight; 69 were less than 7 per cent underweight; 164 were average; and 57 were 10 per cent or more overweight. Next, reports on physical defects were studied. Out of 317 children, 281 had defects and only 38 had received treatment.

An investigation of the faulty diets of our young children revealed that the problems fall in three groups: too little food; food inadequate in kind; and bad food habits. In many cases all meals were insufficient in amount due to poverty or ignorance of food values. Children's desire to play and their fear of being late resulted in curtailed meals. Children with certain physical defects had no appetite. Too little milk, too few vegetables, too much candy and other sweets, and use of coffee and tea were prevailing conditions.

*Remedial measures.* The services of the social agencies were se-

cured and the mothers of the underweight children deficient in diet were invited to demonstrations in which model breakfasts and lunches for children were prepared. Mimeographed menus were distributed and samplings of foods prepared by the nutritionists were given to the mothers. Underweight children kept weight graphs; refreshments served at parties were greatly modified; many physical defects were corrected.

This year we plan to extend the study of diets by having discussion groups of parents and children; by experiments to show the harmful effects of excessive use of certain foods; by visual aids such as charts and films; and by planning and preparing meals in school. The value of, and necessity for this school program is obvious to all who have taken part in it.

#### A STUDY OF HOME RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRIMARY CHILDREN AND THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THEY PRESENT

Miss Grace Narr, assisted by Miss Anna Gilbertson, and other teachers

In Public School 8, in a highly privileged area, we made an investigation to find out if there really was any relationship between the number of home responsibilities a child has been trained to assume regularly and his behavior in the classroom. One hundred and eighty children of our first and second grades were studied.

A "Questionnaire on Children's Home Responsibilities" was sent into each home. It listed personal, social, household, and family responsibilities that a child might reasonably be expected to practise, with an explanation of the purpose of the study, and instructions for checking. Of the one hundred eighty questionnaires sent into the homes, one hundred and seventy-four were returned. Each individual paper was scored by the teacher. All findings were then pooled and charted giving a picture of the entire group.

The teachers then made a class chart of children who never practised certain responsibilities in the home and began to rearrange the

committees carrying out classroom activities so that those children were given every opportunity for social growth.

The Haggerty-Olson-Wickman Behavior Rating Schedules were next used for each child. The findings seem to indicate that the children trained regularly in home responsibilities, personal, social, and household, stand a better chance of a high behavior rating than do the children left carefree at home.

One valuable outcome of this study for us has been the definite knowledge we now have of the social needs of each individual child. Our curriculum is full of opportunities that will develop these children into individuals with social knowledge and a sense of social responsibilities.

I present here a few of the opportunities that the set-up of our modern primary classroom with its activity program affords for the development of these children who never practise at home some of the responsibilities listed on the home questionnaire.

Under "school housekeeping" one of our teachers lists thirteen committees each consisting of two or three members. There are committees for the care of playground equipment, pets, plants, library table, game table, electric lights, supply closet, erasers, blackboards, chalk, coatroom, tools, and material used in activity work. There is also another committee for mending books. The members of the committees are changed monthly.

The class party provides for the practice of both social and household responsibilities. Committees are appointed to plan the program for the entertainment of guests, to write invitations, to buy refreshments, to prepare and serve them, and to clean up after the party.

A chart made by the children, suggesting things to do when not busy with class assignments, helps to occupy their leisure time with pleasure and profit. One class made a chart to be used at home. This device has met with the approval of some of our parents and they have helped by suggesting additions to the list.

Through this type of study the school may ascertain exactly what

responsibilities each child needs for his social development and what practice in those areas he gets at home. The school then may provide every opportunity for the practice of needed responsibilities for each individual. But without the other important factor in the child's life, the home working with the school, little of permanent value will be gained. Knowing this, we have had *personal interviews with parents* whose children have low ratings in behavior and home responsibilities and have explained to them our program and suggested ways in which the home could coöperate with the school to the end that the child may develop a stability of purpose and character.

#### THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY ART CURRICULUM

J. Winthrop Andrews, *Director of Art*

The sociological survey and the subsequent study carried on in Yonkers revealed to those who participated that the environment of a school community predicts the future of its children to a greater extent than had previously been supposed. Education has not in the past considered it necessary to adapt the school curriculum to the specific needs of the school community, as shown by a study of its sociological conditions. The art department has set itself the problem of better adjusting the art curriculum to the requirements of the pupils of each school group and to so influence the neighborhood that aesthetic improvements will be made; that those things inside and outside the school which handicap the child's aesthetic development will be done away with or neutralized by the stressing of the things that are uplifting and can be considered as assets.

It behooves teachers to understand more clearly these forces and in some way to lessen them and neutralize them by other more worth-while influences. Also, we should appreciate that each group has some advantageous factors, which possibly are not in other groups and which can be made use of to stimulate and raise the art standards of that community.

The general trend for research in all fields of service has, perhaps, shown us the advisability of a more careful observation and evaluation of facts and conditions and hence a wiser application of our theories. Thus, it was considered advisable to survey the aesthetic conditions of each school community. This was done through two questionnaires. The eighty questions asked in the first survey depended on the principals, teachers, art supervisors, and groups such as P.T.A.'s and junior councils for the answers. The second secured information from pupils. This survey endeavored to cover in a broad way all those things which consciously or unconsciously would influence the child's aesthetic reactions when in school, when going to and from school, when at home, and during his leisure time. The objectives of this survey as stated to the principals were fourfold: to find the aesthetic conditions of the school community; to use the findings as a basis of the art curriculum; to use the art of the community as an aid in the better understanding of art in the everyday life of the community and as a cultural asset; and to try to overcome any lack of aesthetic expression in the community.

The survey gathered information on the following topics: amount and type of nature; housing, both interiors and exteriors; the aesthetic condition of streets, commercial buildings, public buildings, apartment houses, and churches; the nationality and types of the people in the school community, their professions, their avocations, and educational interests; collections of art objects; people who will help as speakers or otherwise; the aesthetic condition of the school; talents and art training of the teachers.

The realization of the constant influence of the environment makes our work as educators in art a community project; more exactly, an area or school-community project. We have not only better to adapt the subjects, standards, skills, and methods to the needs and advantages of each group, but we must encourage community agencies gradually to change the anti-aesthetic conditions



and then make it possible for the children to think and act during their home hours in closer accord with their school art education.

The problem of analyzing our findings is being undertaken by a representative committee in each school. A division of the findings into assets, needs, and deterring factors enables one to have a basis on which to work. Wherever a pattern in the present art curriculum can be used to counteract a "detering factor," it will be stressed and a record kept of the resulting change. A creation of new patterns in the curriculum to meet the new needs is also essential.

The survey is perhaps most helpful in revealing the standards of appreciation of each community. Upon these standards are to be built a more reasonable and sensitive understanding and appreciation of the aesthetic environment by ourselves and our children.

#### LANGUAGE CURRICULUM ADAPTED TO FOREIGN SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOODS

Lillian F. Morrow, *Principal, Public School 24*; Katherine Short, *Vice-Principal, Public School 18*; Edith Phillips, *President, Primary Teachers Council*; and assisting committee of teachers

Tests made by the school psychologist indicated that in Public Schools 12, 18, and 24 language development was below other school achievement and not in keeping with the children's known mental ability. Public School 18 is 95 per cent Italian and Public School 12 is 70 per cent Russian. Twenty-five per cent of the children in both schools hear no English at home and more than fifty per cent hear a foreign language and broken English. The children of Public School 24 hear a foreign language in one third of their homes. Foreign-language newspapers and radio programs are the rule.

The faculties of these schools are making a survey of the language problems by listening to the children in as many different situations as possible, in the playgrounds, during free periods in school, on the streets, in the movies, etc., and classifying their vocabulary and methods of expression.

As a result of these observations, teachers hope to determine the causes of language difficulties and utilize the school-activity curriculum to bring about the improvement that is necessary if the children are to make adequate adjustments in their social, civic, vocational, and community situations as well as the more immediate adjustment to their life in school. The analysis of the out-of-school language habits of children will reveal what is required to compensate for the inadequacies in their home and community language experiences. At the same time, an analysis of schoolbooks and school vocabularies will indicate which materials are beyond the comprehension of the children because of lacks in experience and vocabulary.

The specific remedial measures will add to the school program: (1) necessary vocabulary and language ability to express experiences; (2) new experiences so that the children will have something to express; and (3) interpretations of experiences to prepare the children to comprehend new and related experiences.

With the improved ability of the teachers growing out of their understanding of the causes and specific nature of the language handicaps, with the deliberate development of useful vocabularies to meet civic, social, religious, vocational, and school situations, and with the emphasis on remedial efforts on specific idioms and grammatical constructions in games, dramatizations, and similar activities, these children should be helped in meeting their adjustment problems—they should be given a real, effective education.

#### THE YONKERS RECREATION SURVEY

Recreation has been recognized as one of the pressing community needs by neighborhood councils, the schools, junior councils, P.T.A.'s, civic organizations, the Yonkers Coördinating Council, the courts, and several public departments. Surveys of adequacy of recreational facilities have led to confusing findings because a tabulation of attendance reports of all agencies does not allow for over-

lapping memberships and a comparison of the total recreation space and service with the population figures does not reveal the real problem—the availability of space and service according to the needs of natural areas.

The elementary schools of Yonkers, with one exception, participated in a careful questionnaire survey of the leisure-time activities of their pupils. This is the first comprehensive study of recreational opportunities and habits from the standpoint of the participants—the children of Yonkers.

The results will be tabulated and interpreted for use in the following ways: (1) by the teacher in understanding and helping individual children; (2) by teachers for group guidance in the use of leisure time; (3) by teachers in curriculum revision in terms of needs and experiences; (4) by principals in adapting school programs and facilities; (5) by junior councils, neighborhood councils, civic associations, and P.T.A.'s in neighborhood planning and improvement; (6) by the newspapers, the Yonkers Coördinating Council, the Recreation Commission, and the common council in planning and improving the city recreational program.

Excerpts from school reports follow:

The questionnaire for the recreation study was administered to 803 children in Public School 4. The survey revealed the following significant facts: less than 10 per cent of the children play in parks or playgrounds; 50 per cent play on streets, lots, and yards. This is due to the fact that the nearest playground is more than a mile away. Only 15 per cent frequent organized clubs, less than 20 per cent visit their friends, and an even smaller percentage attends parties. Evidently the children depend on the school for the bulk of their social experiences. Only 9 per cent reported that they help with the work at home, 5 per cent worked after school, and only 10 per cent reported that they worked from one to three hours in the garden. This is surprising in view of the fact that this rural community comprises a large percentage of foreign parents on economic levels below average who might well add to their revenue by gardening. The economic conditions and cultural interests of the community are reflected in the fact that 6 per cent take music lessons and practice. Over 60 per cent of the

children spend from one to three hours in the movies and 90 per cent spend from one to three hours listening to the radio. These are startling figures that education must consider.<sup>1</sup>

The recreation study of the 403 children of Public School 12, in a foreign-background neighborhood, revealed that only half of the children use the playground on weekdays or Saturday and Sunday. This is due to the distance of the playground and its lack of recreational facilities. This probably accounts for the 40 per cent the survey shows playing in the streets and the 12 per cent loitering around the stores. Only 11 per cent of the children ride bicycles at any time during the day.

Striking is the small percentage (11 per cent) who are having cultural contacts through the library, the bookmobile, or trips, and also the small percentage (5 per cent) who have membership in any club or character-building organization. Forty-seven per cent of the children attend religious service and receive religious instruction and 12 per cent of the children work after school.

In the list of activities the children wished to engage in if they could, the largest percentage (25 per cent) wished to play games with their friends, and 25 per cent to play games with their parents. Reasons for not engaging in these activities were: "Haven't any friends," and "Parents are working," "Too busy," "Too tired," and "No games." Thirty-five per cent wished to visit the library more often but "It's too far," "Too dangerous," and "Mother won't let me."

The community should assume the responsibility of providing these children with recreational conditions for wholesome living, for under the present circumstances the children cannot develop normal habits in terms of physical and mental health. The school must strive to supply the children with those recreational experiences which are lacking in their homes, such as games, parties, club life, reading experiences, storytelling, dramatics, movies, radio, hiking, dancing, gardening, and hobby interests.<sup>2</sup>

Few children report working after school and a like proportion signify that they help with housework. This is not surprising when we realize that the community is composed of average home-owning parents. Over 15 per cent work in the gardens—further questioning revealing the fact that most had little flower plots of their own. The cultural and socio-economic conditions of the adults is reflected in the fact that 40 per cent

<sup>1</sup> From report of Sophie E. Sievers, Principal, Public School 4.

<sup>2</sup> From report by Agnita C. Wallace, Principal, and teachers of Public School 12.

of our children take music lessons, study dramatics and art. With the exception of the very young children, 75 per cent attend the movies, particularly on Saturday or Sunday. Three to four hours are spent in this activity. Ninety-nine per cent listen to the radio one to six hours per week. Only three children did not listen. The school must, of necessity, consider these potent educational forces.<sup>3</sup>

#### NEW VIEW CURRICULUM

Eljah Parmerter, *Principal, Public School 6*, and teacher groups

Our new curriculum units are worked out by the children through community surveys, investigations, and researches and are based on social problems found in the neighborhood, selected by the children because they concern their lives. The children attempt to remedy revealed conditions by their own efforts, if possible, and learn to enlist the assistance of city departments and community groups when necessary.

Below are brief descriptions of units worked out through this approach.

In a housing unit-of-work through the children's investigation of the neighborhood housing problem, unsanitary conditions were disclosed as well as violations of the Housing Ordinance. The children referred these to the adult Neighborhood Council. They then made a model of this area portraying the lack of recreational facilities and displayed it at four public-housing exhibits. Adults of the city and of our Neighborhood Council gave the problem publicity to obtain Federal aid for a housing experiment.

Our garden unit was based on the neighborhood problem of unsightly yards including that of the school. Community assets were tapped through the Boyce Thompson Institute which tested our soil and recommended fertilizer. Seeds were sold in the neighborhood; the city commissioner was petitioned to remove debris;

<sup>3</sup>From the report of Rocco E. Rescigno, Principal, Public School 22. Other collaborators: Lillian F. Morrow, Principal, Public School 24; Helen Brogan, Principal, Public School 9; and faculties of Public Schools 4, 9, 12, 22, and 25.

a committee from the Neighborhood Council was invited to judge the children's gardens. Later the neighborhood yards were improved. The whole community contributed to the solution of the problem uncovered by this curriculum unit.

In a unit on recreation, dearth of recreational space led the children to petition for the use of the armory parade ground although neighbors opposed the idea. The children were made mindful of consideration to those living near these grounds which they used only under supervision and through controlled activity. This same unit put a stop to children's invasion of a near-by churchyard. Teachers and parents recognized the children's great need through this curriculum unit and united in directing afterschool play.

The value of the "new view curriculum" lies in the opportunity children are afforded to live as actual citizens at their own age level. They work on real neighborhood problems that concern their own lives. They learn to utilize community assets and to overcome community liabilities through practising the techniques necessary in a democracy.